

**UNIVERSITY OF EDUCATION, WINNEBA**

**THE IMPACT OF READING SKILLS ON STUDENTS' WRITING: A CASE  
OF AMUMAN M/A BASIC SCHOOL**



**A dissertation in the Department of Applied Linguistics,  
Faculty of Foreign Languages Education, submitted to the  
School of Graduate Studies, in partial fulfilment  
of the requirements for the award of the degree of  
Master of Education  
(Teaching English as a second Language)  
in the University of Education, Winneba**

**JUNE, 2023**

## DECLARATION

### Student Declaration

I, **Sarah Nkonou**, hereby declare that this Dissertation, with the exception of quotations and references contained in published works which have all been identified and duly acknowledged, is entirely my own original work, and it has not been submitted, either in part or whole, for another degree elsewhere.

Candidate's Signature: .....

Date: .....



### Supervisors' Declaration

I hereby declare that the preparation and presentation of this work was supervised in accordance with the guidelines for supervision of thesis as laid down by the University of Education, Winneba.

Name of Supervisor: **Dr. Sefa Owusu**

Signature: .....

Date: .....

## **DEDICATION**

This study is dedicated to my beloved mother, Mrs. Mary Nkonou.



## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I am extremely grateful to the almighty God for His protection and grace to complete this dissertation.

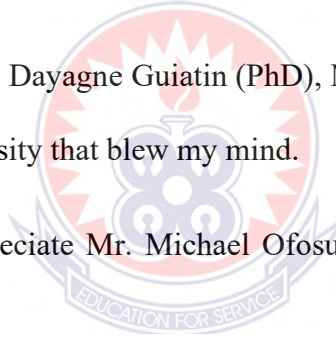
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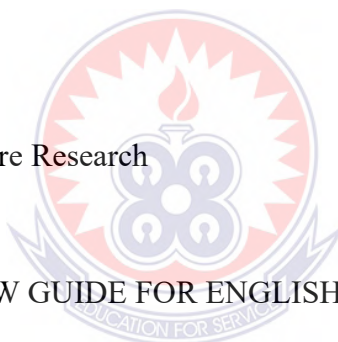
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## ABSTRACT

Reading is one of skills considered important in language learning and like the other skills, the mastery is influenced by some factors. This study sought to investigate the impact of reading skills on students' writing using students of Amuman M/A Basic School as a case study. Also, the study specifically aimed at assessing various methods being used for the teaching of reading comprehension to the students; also, on the part of students, the study sought to identify the main challenges/problems encountered by students in reading comprehension and investigated the effect of reading skills on students' English writing performance. The study adopted a qualitative case study approach to thematically analyse the data collected from fifty-six (56) students and 2 teachers. Purposive sampling technique was used for the sampling of the respondents. Data for the study was collected through interviews, classroom observation and reading assessment. The study revealed that phonics method was the commonest method used by teachers. Furthermore, it was revealed that most students encountered problems such as poor vocabulary mastery, poor fluency and issues with background knowledge when reading in reading comprehension. The study recommended that teachers should make frantic efforts to ensure that students gain interest in reading, both at school and outside the school environment. Again, strategies such as dictation and pronunciation drills must be infused in language teaching to ensure that students improve their language competency through reading.





## CHAPTER ONE

### INTRODUCTION

#### 1.1 Background of the Study

Everyone needs to learn how to read because it is a crucial language ability and a very difficult act. Reading is a variety of processes and skills that readers use to interact with printed words and texts for information and enjoyment. Reading can be used to teach writing, speaking, vocabulary, grammar, spelling, and other language skills. In addition, Zainal and Husin (2011) asserts that reading requires a variety of complicated skills that must work together for the reader to be effective. For instance, proficient readers are aware of the reason they are reading, approach the reading with that reason in mind, use reading strategies they have found to be effective in the past when reading texts with a similar purpose, keep track of their comprehension of the text in light of the reason they are reading, and adjust their strategy use as necessary.

In addition, Zainal and Husin (2011) emphasized that writing is the acquired process of transforming experiences into text, enabling the writer to come to terms with, grow, make clear, and express feelings. It necessitates the improvement of mental abilities. According to Leki (2003), writing is a key gatekeeper for career advancement. Writing proficiency is typically seen as evidence that someone has actually learnt a language. EFL learners have additional difficulties as a result of their shaky command of the syntax and vocabulary necessary for effective thought and idea expression. Due to their low vocabulary and inadequate grammatical expertise, they frequently struggle to write clearly (Al-Meni, 2008). Writing is the externalization and commenting of thinking, and to view composition as distinct from the purposes and beliefs of the writer is to ignore composition as a reflecting tool for meaning-making, claims Applebee

(1984). As a result, many EFL educators have been searching for effective strategies to aid in the writing process and enhance students' writing abilities; one such strategy may be found in comprehensive reading programs.

Writing and reading are intricately related. Reading books with a lot of vocabulary and rhymes or other recurring themes can encourage students to use their higher-order thinking abilities to create their own plots (Wilson, 2016; Emak & Ismail, 2021). It will be easier for students to make the transition to becoming better writers if you provide them the ability to spot effective writing strategies in their readings and give them the chance to practice these strategies. Students will learn to incorporate these crucial elements into their own narratives by reading and exploring short stories having a beginning, middle, and finish (Held, 2010). Teaching reading and writing together has advantages over teaching them separately.

Numerous scholars have underlined the importance of impact of reading on students writing skill. For instance, Krashen (1993) claimed that, under certain circumstances, reading facilitates language learning. These include engaging reading material and a calm, stress-free learning atmosphere. Grabe (1991) stressed the value of extensive reading in helping students develop their automatic word recognition skills. When compared to readers' usual program, a number of research were examined by Elley (1991) and revealed rapid progress in language development. The impact of reading proficiency extends to other linguistic abilities. Children between the ages of three and twelve (above grade level) are said to learn up to 3000 words every year, according to Nagy and Herman (1987). Stotsky (1983) demonstrated the beneficial impact of reading on students' writing abilities. Finally, Kembo (1993) emphasized the importance of extended reading in helping students have the confidence and competence to handle these lengthy materials. Therefore, it can be claimed that using

extensive reading when teaching and studying a foreign language helps both reading competence and total language competency. Writing development “always includes reading development,” according to Zamel (1992).

Few studies have been undertaken in the Ghanaian context, such as Adablah (1992), which also looked at instructors’ reading habits in a few subdistricts of the Accra Metropolitan region, despite the expanding body of data demonstrating the effect of reading abilities on students’ writing. Arthur (2006) investigated reading habits in the Sunyani Municipality while and Brew (2006) investigated the reading habits of pupils in private and public schools. Based on the above reviewed studies, no research was found in the literature on the impact of reading skills on students’ writing and it is against this background, the focus of this study is this to investigate the impact of reading skills on students’ writing using Amuman M/A basic school as a case study.

## **1.2 Statement of the Problem**

The current issues with pupils, including their subpar exam results as well as their bad English speaking and writing, have been attributed to their lack of reading habits. Parents, the government, and education professionals in the nation are quite concerned about the poor reading habits that students in secondary schools are developing. In Ghana, the performance of students writing the BECE examination has been declining for a while (Kwadjo-Pobi, 2016). Poor reading habits among pupils have been blamed for this degradation. For instance, the Chief Examiner's Report for the WASSCE tests in 2012 and 2013 showed a percentage failure of 31.19% and 19.15%, respectively. The report ascribed the subpar performance to a lack of in-depth and lengthy reading, weak communication skills, failure to grasp the questions, and poor orthography or spelling abilities (Chief Examiners Report, 2013). Furthermore, a different assessment from Ghana Education Service in 2014 similarly showed a decline

in students' English performance. Only 45.2% of test takers successfully completed the subject to be eligible for university study, with 20.9% receiving a grade of 9 in English in 2014. Moreover, Ghanaian students also complain about being unable to write efficiently. These results indicate a low level of literacy among Ghanaian students, which may have negative implications for their academic and professional development.

One of the factors that may affect students' reading and writing performance is the quality of instruction they receive. The National Reading Panel (2000) identified five key areas of reading instruction: phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and text comprehension. These areas should be integrated with writing instruction to help students develop their literacy skills. However, not all teachers are equipped with the knowledge and skills to provide effective reading and writing instruction. Moreover, not all schools have adequate resources and materials to support students' reading and writing development. Similarly, Tutto and Ramos (2021) found senior high school students in the Philippines had poor reading and writing performance despite having positive attitudes toward these skills. The study also found a significant correlation between students' attitudes and their reading and writing performance.

In the Ghanaian context, the teaching of reading comprehension in Ghanaian schools is often characterized by the use of traditional methods, such as rote memorization, drill and practice, and teacher-centered approaches, which do not foster critical thinking, creativity, and self-expression among learners (Akyeampong et al., 2013; Boateng & Ofori, 2018). Moreover, the curriculum and assessment of reading comprehension do not reflect the diverse needs and interests of learners, nor do they align with the standards and expectations of the 21st century (Okyere et al., 2017).

There is a need to explore how the teaching and learning of reading comprehension can be improved to enhance the writing skills of Ghanaian students. Specifically, there is a gap in the literature on how reading skills affect students' English writing performance in Ghanaian contexts. Most of the studies on this topic have been conducted in developed countries, such as the United States, the United Kingdom, and Australia, where the linguistic and cultural backgrounds of learners are different from those of Ghanaian learners (e.g., Graham & Hebert, 2010; Langer & Flihan, 2000; Shanahan & Shanahan, 2008). Therefore, there is a need to conduct a study that investigates the impact of reading skills on students' writing in a Ghanaian setting, using Amuman M/A Basic School as a case.

### **1.3 Objective of the Study**

The main objective of the study is to investigate the impact of reading skills on students' writing. The specific objectives are as follows;

1. To assess various methods being used for the teaching of reading comprehension to the students.
2. To identify the main challenges encountered by students at Amuman M/A Basic School when reading comprehension.
3. To investigate the effect of reading skills on students' English writing performance.

### **1.4 Research Questions**

In order to achieve the objectives, the following research questions are formulated.

1. What are the various teaching methods used in teaching reading comprehension to the students?

2. What are the main problems encountered by Amuman M/A Basic School when reading comprehension?
3. How does reading positively affect students' English writing performance?

### **1.5 Significance of the Study**

The study is important since it would contribute to the body of knowledge on the impact of reading on students' writing. Again, it is hoped that the pupils will be able to produce meaningful writing paragraphs, essays, letters, reports, short stories, articles, compositions, and summaries, and reading programs may help to determine students' progress in previously mentioned skills as well as their mastery of the writing sub-skills such as thesis statement, relevance, coherence, cohesion, exposition, quantity, unity, wording, and grammaticality. The findings of the study will help researchers involved in the educational process gain insights into reading and its effect on writing skill and seek to improve it overtime. Furthermore, the findings of this study may be able to open the mind of the students towards the importance of reading to improve their writing performance and may be able to help the students to see the difficulties in writing that they may face if they do not have the habit to read and could motivate them to read more.

Again, it is believed that the results of the study will be significantly beneficial to the Ministry of Education, Ghana Education Service and parents with wards in the basic schools. Moreover, the study will offer useful suggestions and recommendations to curriculum planners which would improve the quality and reading skills of students. Furthermore, heads of schools will also benefit from this study because they will get information that would guide them to manage the reading skills of their students effectively towards the achievement of better results in English language.

Finally, it is envisaged that the outcome of this study will serve as the basis for further research work by interested researchers. Thus, it may encourage further research, which in turn, may lead to the enrichment of the field of impact of reading and its effect on writing skill in general and language teaching and learning in particular.

### **1.6 Scope of the Study**

The study is focused on obtaining data on the impact of reading skills on students' writing. It did focus on students' reading skills and its effect their writing.

This study was limited to Form 3 students and English teachers of Amuman M/A. The Form 3 will be included in the study because they are those going to write the Basic Education Certificate Education (BECE).

### **1.7 Limitation of the Study**

There are numerous limiting factors that would be encountered during the entire research period. Relevant issue of concern would be the tendency of target group absenting themselves from class. This is because a large percentage of the pupil in the selected school are day pupil. There is therefore the possibility that some pupil may occasionally stay away from school during the class hours. Again, reading and comprehension ability of students can be fully ascertained through a long period of interpersonal academic interaction with the students concerned. Unfortunately, this research is time-bound and does not give the researcher a wide range of freedom.

### **1.8 Organization of the Study**

This study is organized into five major chapters, with each serving a different. Chapter one gives an overview of the subject matter of the study having provided readers with the background of the study, statement of the problem, aim and objectives

of the study, research questions, significance and scope of the study, limitation and organization of the study.

Chapter two reviews existing relevant literature on the subject matter of the study and includes literature dealing with concepts, theories and empirical studies. In doing so, the chapter affirms the research gap and also constructs a conceptual framework to guide the study.

Chapter three indicates the manner in which the study's data will be collected and analyzed, includes the research approach, research design, research population, data collection instruments and procedures, methods for ensuring reliability and validity, data analysis techniques and ethical considerations. Meanwhile, chapter four includes the presentation, analysis and interpretation of the data. Finally, chapter five provides a summary of the study's findings, draws conclusions from those findings, provides study recommendations, and suggestions for future studies.

### **1.9 Chapter Summary**

The chapter gave a brief introduction of the study and presented the statement of the problem; purpose of the study; objectives; research questions; significance of the study; scope and limitations of the study and organization of the study.



## CHAPTER TWO

### RELATED LITERATURE REVIEW

#### 2.0 Introduction

This chapter reviews the relevant literature related to the study. The chapter analyses and discusses the relevant literature on the topic under study. The chapter reviews the pertinent literature for the study while drawing on earlier research and practice to improve a coherent conceptual and theoretical framework suitable for reading skills. Conceptual, empirical, and theoretical viewpoints are used to review the literature. In this chapter, the following themes are reviewed and addressed in light of the study's research questions:

1. Concept of Reading
2. Concept of English Writing
3. Reading Skills and English Writing
4. Effect of Reading Habits on Students' Writing
5. Different Teaching Methods
6. Theoretical Framework
7. Empirical literature

#### 2.1 Concept of Reading

Reading is a social activity in addition to being a cognitive and psycholinguistic activity. Reading is a challenging cognitive activity that requires a child to have strong visual, auditory, and motor skills in order to detect words and symbols, connect them to the correct sounds, and give them meaning based on prior knowledge. Reading skill has been linked to teacher skill, according to Morris (1984) and Reid and Donaldson (1977), and students who are taught by ineffective teachers are more likely to struggle

with reading than other students (Reid and Donaldson, 1977, p. 62). According to Dadzie (2008), reading is the ability to understand words contained in a document and make use of the knowledge for personal growth and development. This implies making meaning out of recorded information either printed or non-printed in the life of an individual. People read for different reasons and purposes, some of which include for pleasure, leisure, relaxation, information and for knowledge.

Reading is a necessary component of a productive study routine that will enhance students' academic achievement. Reading is the key to success, not only in academic settings but also as a tool for lifetime learning, claim Oriogu et al. (2017). Career advancement and academic success are fuelled by reading. Thus, reading is the best way for someone to systematically delve deep into knowledge and its enduring gift. According to Karim and Hasan (2007), reading involves a variety of complicated skills, including the capacity to interpret written words, skim for information, and then maybe read extensively. Reading is also seen as a process, a way of thinking, and a type of real experience. According to Okebukola (2006), reading gives people the means to pass on knowledge to each successive generation and does enable one to hear the wisdom and experiences of the past. Additionally, according to Aina et al. (2011), reading is a talent that must be developed from a young age, and the habit of reading should start early and be ingrained throughout one's career. But reading is a consistent daily practice that develops into a habit and ultimately a culture. According to Okwilagwe (1998), it should involve more reasoning and require all sorts of thinking, including critical, analytical, creative, imaginative, evaluative, judgmental, and problem-solving. This involves the meaningful interpretation of words, phrases, and sentences. Reading requires work and frequently involves a choice; motivation is

essential for reading engagement (Wigfield et al., 2004). Paulson (2006) made the following suggestions in his article on creating a reading culture:

*“if we identify an important goal of ... reading programs for college readers as providing a foundation of life-long reading, a study-skills approach to college development reading falls short. Instead, we must focus on encouraging and instilling in... students the belief that reading has intrinsic value. It is through this approach that solid academic progress can be obtained as well”.*

As a result, developing a reading habit is essential for children to enhance their intellectual potential and capabilities. Developing the habit of reading, which “develops a capacity for concentrated attention and growth,” is one continual strategy to learn new things (Obada, 2011). Shen (2006) defines reading habits as the frequency, volume, and content of reading. In his study of reading habits, Onyejiaku (2010) found that when students develop good reading habits, their knowledge retention, comprehension of the topic being studied, and ability to process information during tests and exams all significantly increase. Furthermore, according to Onyejiaku (2010), an individual is driven to succeed at a level that is consistent with his or her existing routines and that is functional to how they perceive themselves. According to Roth (2002), a school system’s reputation is based on how well its students learn since developing strong reading habits depends on students’ capacity to properly comprehend with high levels of focus. According to Caverly et al. (2014), “college performance hinges in large part on students’ capacity to engage in strategic reading of broad academic. One of the basic goals of every educational institution is to grow people in character and excellence through teaching and research, and improving student academic performance.

According to Nssien (2007), the issue of poor reading skills among Nigerian students was brought on by the following: a slow rate of reading and comprehension, a challenge in separating important points from unimportant details, a lack of vocabulary or word power, poor reading habits and interests, distractions from watching television and movies, and a lack of interest in and access to appropriate reading materials. According to a study done in Nigeria by Henry (2004), 40% of adult Nigerians have never finished reading a non-fiction book from cover to cover. In fact, only 1% of successful men and women in Nigeria read one nonfiction book each month on average. The ordinary Nigerian reads fewer than one book a year. According to the same study, 30 million high school graduates in Nigeria have subpar reading abilities. As a result, there is a fundamental societal gap between individuals for whom life is an accumulation of new experience and knowledge and others for whom aging is a process of mental atrophy. The National Endowment for the Arts (2004) claimed that reading is declining significantly among students and that it is also becoming less common in America. Additionally, studies in Malaysia revealed that extremely few Malaysian students read (Kaur and Thiyagarajah, 2009). Onovughe (2012) came to the depressing conclusion that reading culture is rapidly declining in Nigeria.

Reading is the ability to interpret anything meant to communicate a message or to facilitate communication, not merely printed material (Onovughe, 2012). The introduction of the Internet has completely changed how pupils read, and its domination is fairly common among young people. The availability of more digital information has led to an increase in the amount of time that people, especially young ones, spend reading electronic items (Liu, 2005). However, the Internet has produced a platform that makes it possible for students to access knowledge resources from anywhere in the world. There is also a large deal of research exploring for changes in reading habits

brought on by the widespread use of the Internet and other reading resources, particularly those that use hypertexts and multimedia resources (Liu, 2005). Despite the fact that the Internet is a text-heavy environment, reading from an online screen differs dramatically from reading from a printed page, according to Cull (2011). Numerous studies have demonstrated how much students prefer Internet resources, but there is still a troubling issue: the Internet has adversely affected students' reading habits, as they now spend more time on social media chatting with friends and engaging in activities unrelated to academics. This has made them “reluctant readers,” which invariably compromises their academic performance. As a result, academic libraries should make an effort to offer sufficient information resources (both print and non-print) and maintain a friendly, conducive environment that allows students to study and read without interruptions. They should also make an effort to put Internet monitoring policies into place so that students would carefully use it for academic purposes. Accordingly, a challenge for educators is to support students who are motivated readers while motivating unmotivated students to develop a lifelong reading habit. Camp (2007) further asserts that just as all teachers are teachers of reading, all teachers must also support and serve as role models for the habit of lifelong reading and learning. As a result, librarians, teachers, and parents should work together to motivate and encourage pupils to read in order to develop more responsible adults.

## **2.2 Concept of Writing**

One of the English language abilities that pupils should be able to master is writing. Writing is typically a means of communicating a message from the writer to the reader. The pupils must grasp other aspects of English, such as grammar, vocabulary, spelling, and punctuation, in order to write well. They must be able to structure their thoughts in order to properly compose sentences. A writer should also

translate his or her ideas into language that readers can understand on their own, without additional explanation from the writer. It is obvious that writing involves much more than simply arranging words on a page; good writing also calls for ideas that should be converted into written form in order to make the content solid and obvious and allow readers to investigate what they have read. Additionally, pupils must be able to effectively communicate their thoughts in writing in order to write well.

Writing is, by definition, the creation of communication, linking concepts, developing information, or presenting arguments to a specific reader or audience (Hedge, 2005). Writing, according to Al-Asmari (2013), is the ability to convey one's own ideas and thoughts in writing in a second or a foreign language while maintaining a level of correctness and coherence. According to this definition, writing is the act of expressing thoughts through written words. The writer must gather and digest as much information as they can before starting to write. This presumption is consistent with Kellogg's theories that writing is a significant cognitive challenge because it simultaneously tests one's language, reasoning, and memory skills (Kellogg, 2018). In particular, Bailey (2003) points out that the English writing course is created to help EFL students learn how to write successfully since they must complete their writing assignments for exams, class tests, homework, or final exams. English writing began with selecting a topic, followed by the creation of an introduction, body paragraphs, and conclusion. All of those sentences may be found in an expository, argumentative, descriptive, or narrative essay, paper, report, project portfolio, case study, or dissertation (Redman & Maples, 2017).

Writing for academic purposes has a different goal than writing for non-academic purposes. Writing to a friend, for instance, aims to tell them of the writer's situation; writing a funny narrative, on the other hand, typically aims to amuse the

reader. But in an academic atmosphere, writing is meant to convey ideas in a logical and analytical manner (Horkoff, 2015). Therefore, the writer's informational, structural, transactional, aesthetic, and process expertise determines the quality of English writing (Hattab, 2018). There are a number of reasons why students in Ghana struggle with their writing abilities, of course. English grammar proficiency, a deficiency in English vocabulary, and a lack of writing experience are possible causes. For their writing tasks, students frequently translate directly from Ghanaian language into English or utilize Google Translate. They regularly compose ambiguous sentences that occasionally make no sense or are challenging to comprehend (Husin & Nurbayani, 2017).

### **2.3 Factors Affecting Students' Writing**

Writing skills are regarded as being quite complex and difficult to teach at times since they require the learner to grasp not just the grammatical and rhetorical methods but also the intellectual and judging parts (Masjihari, 2010). Rich vocabulary allows people to convey their views in a way that captures the interest of their intended audience, which is one of the prominent variables that influences writing success (Ruday, 2014). The capacity to express concepts in a logical order and a compelling sequence is referred to as organizational ability. The third is developing ideas in such a way that they can seamlessly transition from one sentence to the next and from one paragraph to the next. As a result, the sentence has coherence and unity (Sudirman & Tiasari, 2015). The fourth skill is the capacity to express ideas and thoughts clearly and smoothly utilizing a variety of sentences.

In addition, there are certain additional elements that affect writing. Reading habits are one of the major factors that influence writing, according to Krmz (2009). The majority of teaching tools, it has been noted, promote language learning, which in

turn highlights the students' degree of reading comprehension. Aspects of psychology such as intelligence, attitude, curiosity, motivation, and competence can also have an impact on how well students learn. Additionally, a number of additional factors, including attitude, self-concept, interest, motivation, and study habits, might influence students learning success throughout the learning process (Dahlia, 2016).

#### **2.4 Reading Skills and Writing Skill among English Students**

There have been studies on the connections between students' reading habits and their vocabulary mastery of the English language (Santoso, 2015), their reading comprehension (Muawanah, 2014), their speaking and writing skills (Akbar, 2014), their critical thinking (Juriati, Ariyanti, & Fitriana, 2018), and their reading comprehension (Akbar, 2014). (Suhartono, 2014). These indicate that there are consistently such inquiries or studies of reading and writing in the setting of Ghana. Additionally, there are a few other reasons why ESL students struggle with their writing abilities, particularly for junior and senior high school students. The structural, grammatical, and stylistic differences between Ghanaian and English languages are among the causes. Students attempt straight translation from Ghanaian language into English. In this situation, students frequently come up with a statement that occasionally makes no sense or is challenging for readers to understand (Husin & Nurbayani, 2017).

Less than 25% of 546 EFL students in East Java were found to read outside of the classroom, according to one research (Nazhari & Delfi, 2016). Consequently, such a low reading habit was affected by Indonesian tradition of spoken culture, according to a study done by Mustafa (2012) among students in the English Language Study Program at the University of Riau. These results are consistent with Adetunji's (2007) assertion that a student's personal traits, such as age distribution, social status, and



parental occupation, are determinants of their reading habits as a high school student. However, Nathanson, Pruslow, and Levitt (2008) discovered evidence suggesting that parents have a stronger influence on students' motivation to read. Accessibility to electronic resources like the internet is another consideration (Ogeyik & Akyay, 2009).

However, the gender and age of the students has an impact on their reading habits. Putro & Lee's (2017) research also demonstrated that girls outperformed boys in reading comprehension when compared to men who are more significant readers. Boys frequently dislike reading and have a negative attitude toward it, according to Clark and Foster (2005), but girls typically feel the opposite way. According to research conducted in the United States, students should not read for longer than two hours per day (Blackwood, 1991 in Florence, 2017), and according to Dipika and Mehedi (2013), men typically prefer reading newspapers to women.

## **2.5 Factors Hindering Students Reading Skills**

In order to identify the variables that influenced students' reading habits, Ogunrombi and Odio (1995), cited in Hassan, Olasen, and Mathew (2012), conducted an investigation involving 600 students in 10 secondary schools in Nigeria. It was determined that reading was hampered by living situations. It was found that other elements influencing students' bad reading habits were a lack of reading materials, a lack of reading materials and skilled librarians, a lack of public libraries, and a lack of teacher motivation. With the main goal of encouraging a reading culture among students, Wilson and Bhamjee (2007) looked into the promotion of literacy among secondary school students. The findings showed that while 32% of the students claimed they lacked a peaceful home environment in which to read, 9% of the pupils hailed from literate backgrounds in which their parents read every day. According to Morrow (1995), who was mentioned by N'Namdi (2005), parents are the first and most

important teachers who should invest the most time in encouraging their children to read. Zhang (2002) suggests that encouraging big reading in the classroom can aid students in developing good reading habits and literacy skills.

Recent research has confirmed that external factors have a negative impact on the development of reading habits. Poor reading environments, peer pressure, the school curriculum, parental and teacher influence, and other variables are just a few of the things Adetunji and Oladeji (2007) listed as factors that prevent correct and good reading habits. The teacher is thought of as the key that unlocks the reading garden door. The teacher might also encourage the reluctant reader to read by persistent and tenacious modelling (Loh, 2009). Morrison and Cooney (2001) hold the opinion that the home environment is a crucial setting for children's first learning and socio-emotional development. It appears to be the most important during a child's formative years and is also crucial for the subsequent years of learning in primary school. According to Ajila and Olutola (2000), as parents are the primary caregivers in a person's life, the state of the home affects that person's reading habits. A child's performance level and response to life events are influenced by his or her upbringing and environment.

Although the school is in charge of the experiences that shape the person's life, outside of school parents and the individual's participation at home play important roles in shaping the child's personality and forming him or her into a decent citizen.

### **2.5.1 School and Teacher Factors contributing to Students' low reading abilities**

According to Adebayo (2008), Botha et al. (2008), and Lindner (2008), many teachers have a limited understanding of how to teach literacy and a bad attitude toward teaching their students reading methods. According to Botha et al. (2008), the quality

of reading instruction and learning has been negatively impacted by the hiring of inexperienced language teachers. The majority of students have weak literacy abilities, which is a result of instructors' incompetence and the subpar teaching methods they employ to teach reading in the classroom, according to Njie (2013), Lucas (2011), and Harrington (2001). Harrington (2001) also made the point that the effectiveness of the teacher is the most important aspect in students' learning.

Researchers have offered suggestions as a means of addressing the low reading proficiency of students. For instance, Cekiso (2012) recommends that English language teachers teach students reading strategy to assist them develop as strategic readers. While Adebayo (2008) asserts that teachers' effective teaching techniques can improve their students' reading abilities. The teaching of reading competency is fraught with difficulties, according to Adebayo (2008), Aduwa-Ogiegbaen and Iyamu (2006), including insufficient teaching time and a lack of adequate and practical resources in schools. According to Lucas (2011) and Rany (2013), school administrators' not providing students with the required textbooks for practice reading, a lack of an appropriate curriculum to help students improve their reading abilities, and crowded and noisy classroom environments can all contribute to students having low reading proficiency.

## **2.6 Different Teaching Methods**

Teachers can select from a variety of various instructional strategies. Teachers are still interested in which is the most efficient, though. Gonzalez et al. (2006) claim that all strategies have had some degree of success, some of which are listed below.

### **2.6.1 Phonics**

The speech is broken down into component sounds and represented by letters in the phonics approach (Alderson, 2000, p.132). It demonstrates how letters correspond to the sounds they stand for. The sounds of individual letters or groups of letters are taught to children, along with how to look at the letters and combine them to create a fluid sound. Children are taught, for instance, that the sound represented by the word “cat” is k, a velar sound, followed by a /a/ and a /t/, which together form the letters k-a-t.

In order to teach phonics, there are two methods, according to Lerner (2000). In the first, called analytical phonics, students are taught to examine a word’s entirety before dissecting it to compare its pieces for the letter-sound associations they have already encountered. In synthetic phonics, students are taught to associate a single letter or group of letters with the correct sound before blending the sound to create words. They are carefully taught the alphabet’s letters as well as the letter combinations that are used to represent each sound; for instance, the word “father” is made up of the letters f-a-t-h-e-r.

### **2.6.2 The look and say or whole-word method of reading**

Levine (1994) asserts that the “look and speak” or whole-word style of reading teaches kids to read by teaching them to recognize patterns rather than breaking words down into individual letters. When using this technique, flashcards with words and an accompanying image are frequently used to help students develop a high-frequency sight vocabulary until they memorize the pattern of letters, phrases, or sentences. For instance, students are shown an image of a ball without the letter that goes with it to symbolize it. The teacher then places the letters string (b-a-l-l) beneath the image after

asking the class to describe what they see and label it. Other items that start with the same letter sound and even words can be included in the exercises.

### **2.6.3 The whole language method of reading**

According to Lerner (2000), the wholeness and connection of spoken language, reading, and writing underlie whole-language. It emphasizes the active expression of ideas through writing and vocal language, as opposed to the phonic method's concentration on letter-sound correlations. According to Lerner (2000), the whole language approach is predicated on the idea that all kids will naturally learn to read as they learn to talk and walk. According to Goodman (1990), who pioneered the whole language approach, a beginning reader needs little guidance as they decode the letters and construct sentences that embody the visuals and sounds of language.

Reading strategies that emphasize meaning rather than sound-to-symbol correspondence enable children to begin reading books right away without having to utilize phonics. According to the whole language approach, children need to be immersed in engaging literature in order to develop fluency as readers. These books should intrigue children and make learning new words exciting.

### **2.6.4 Combining phonics and whole-language in teaching reading**

Reutzel and Cooter (2010), Stanovich (1980), and Rumelhart (1980), who advocate for merging the phonics and whole-language approaches, recommend teaching phonics to learners independently, directly, and methodically rather than in the context of reading literature. Reutzel and Cooter (2010) hold that mastering the three skill areas of decoding, vocabulary, and comprehension, which are thought to lead to competent understanding and, in turn, enable proficient and independent reading, is how one learns to read. According to Rumerhalt (1980), while processing letter features

and spelling patterns, a reader is simultaneously paying attention to the overall context, syntax, and the semantic and syntactic environment in which the words occur. But according to Stanovich (1980), in order for students to acquire reading abilities, they must regularly engage with high-quality literature through reading aloud, talking about stories, and being exposed to new information and language. In order for students to develop their reading skills, phonics instruction should come first, followed by consistent reading practice.

## **2.7 Theoretical Framework**

This study was informed by two theories namely traditional bottom-up view and cognitive view. The researcher chose these theories for the study, because of their relevance to the study's objectives. Additionally, the researcher chose these theories because they both explain how reading skills influence writing skills. Therefore, the researcher chose these theories to examine how reading skills impact students' writing at different levels of language and cognition (Omaggio 1993).

### **2.7.1 The Traditional Bottom-up View**

The traditional bottom-up method of teaching reading was influenced by behaviourist psychology, which in the 1950s asserted that learning was based on "habit formation, brought about by the repeated association of a stimulus with a response," and language learning was described as a "response system that humans acquire through automatic conditioning processes," where "some patterns of language are reinforced (rewarded) and others are not," and "only those patterns reinforced by positive reinforcement are retained" (Omaggio 1993: 45-46). The audio-lingual approach, which intended to create second language "habits" through drilling, repetition, and error correction, was founded on behaviourism.

As phonics is the primary technique used in today's bottom-up reading instruction, and it calls for students to match letters to sounds in a predetermined order. This point of view asserts that reading is a process in which readers decode a text word by word, linking the individual words to form phrases and ultimately sentences (Gray and Rogers, cited in Kucer, 1987). The emphasis on behaviourism, according to Samuels and Kamil (1988: 25), treated reading as a word-recognition reaction to the stimuli of the printed words, with "little attempt (being) made to explain what went on within the recesses of the mind that allowed the human to make sense of the printed page." To understand text, one must combine word meanings to determine the meanings of sentences (Anderson 1994). These lower-level abilities focus on identifying and remembering since they are tied to the visual input, such as print. Phonics stresses repetition and drills using the sounds that make up words, much as the audio-lingual teaching method. The smallest sound units are the first to be received and processed, followed by letter blends, words, phrases, and sentences. As a result, beginning readers develop a series of subskills that are arranged hierarchically and progress in steps toward comprehension. Readers who have acquired these abilities are thought of as experts who can understand what they read.

According to the bottom-up paradigm, information flow occurs via a succession of stages that transform data before passing it on to the subsequent stage without any feedback or chance for later stages of the process to have an impact on earlier stages (Stanovich, 1980). In other words, the reader's primary responsibility is to recognize graphemes and translate them into phonemes. Language is seen as a code. As a result, readers are viewed as passive absorbers of the text's content. The reader must recreate the meaning that is present in the text. This perspective has influenced the inclusion of exercises in ESL and EFL textbooks that emphasize literal comprehension and give

little to no weight to the reader's prior knowledge or experience with the subject matter. The only interaction is with the fundamental building blocks of sounds and words. The majority of activities centre on perceptual and decoding skills with an emphasis on lexical and grammatical form recognition and memory. This reading paradigm has nearly always come under fire as being inadequate and flawed, mostly because it depends on the formal aspects of the language, primarily words and structure. Although it is feasible to accept this rejection on the grounds that this viewpoint overly relies on structure, it must be admitted that understanding linguistic elements is also important for comprehension to occur. The cognitive approach of reading was first presented to combat the traditional view's overreliance on form.

### **2.7.2 The Cognitive View (top-down processing)**

In the cognitive sciences, a paradigm change took place in the 1960s. The new cognitive theory gave new explanations for how humans learned their first language and somewhat discredited behaviourism in the process. This had a significant impact on the study of ESL/EFL as psycholinguists explained "how such internal representations of the foreign language develop within the learner's mind" (Omaggio, 1993: 57).

Ausubel drew a crucial distinction between meaningful learning and rote learning (quoted in Omaggio, 1993: 58). Memorizing lists of isolated words or rules in a foreign language is an example of rote learning, where the knowledge acquired is transient and liable to be forgotten. On the other hand, meaningful learning happens when new knowledge is presented in a pertinent context and connected to what the learner already knows, making it simple to integrate into one's pre-existing cognitive framework. The top-down approach to L2 learning was eventually influenced by this emphasis on meaning, and in the 1960s and 1970s there was a huge boom of teaching



strategies and activities that heavily emphasized the experience and knowledge of the student.

The idea of how students learn to read has been changed by these new cognitive and top-down processing processes (Smith, 1994). According to this perspective, reading involves more than merely deriving meaning from a text; it also entails making connections between the information in the text and the reader's prior knowledge. In this view, reading is an interaction between the reader and the text that involves an active cognitive process and relies heavily on the reader's prior knowledge to help the reader make sense of what they are reading (Tierney and Pearson, 1994). Reading is a deliberate, logical action that depends on the reader's past knowledge and expectations rather than being a passive, mechanical one. Making sense of written language is just as important as translating print to sound (Smith, 1994: 2). Reading is essentially a psycholinguistic guessing game in which readers sample the text, form hypotheses, test them, accept or reject them, form new hypotheses, and so on.

## **2.8 Empirical Literature**

The contextual studies in connection to the application of reading skills are examined in this section of the chapter. This review was conducted from a variety of nations to guarantee comprehensive coverage of the empirical literature. For instance, Shen (2009) examined the impact of a reading-writing connection project on the first-year EFL college students who studied English as a required subject. The results of the study indicated that the learners' literacy developed not only in linguistic progress but also in critical thinking as well as in personal growth. Reading helped the EFL learners' development of their writing with the stimulus, structures, vocabulary, and prior experience (schema). It was also found that the reading-writing connection had a positive impact on the EFL college students' reading metacognitive awareness (i.e.,

looking back what they read), as well as their reflection of personal values and experience transaction. The findings of the study suggested that reading and writing should be integrated in teaching for the reason that they are not separated skills, but mutually reinforced in EFL classroom.

Similarly, Zainal and Husin (2011) studied the effects of reading on writing performance among faculty of civil engineering students. The results showed that reading has positive effects on students' writing. Generally, the results of this study indicated that reading and writing are connected to each other. It effectively helps students in writing in several ways. Erhan (2011) analysed the effects of the cooperative integrated reading and composition technique and the traditional reading and writing pedagogical methods for primary school students. It was found that there was a statistically significant difference between the reading and writing skills of the experimental and control groups in terms of academic achievement and retention. This difference was discovered in favour of the cooperative integrated reading and composition technique.

Furthermore, Yoshimura (2009) investigated the effects of connecting reading and writing and a checklist to guide the reading process on EFL learners' learning about writing. In this research, ways of reading which are likely to promote the development of writing ability were sought and operationalized into checklist questions for EFL reading instructions. The findings of the study showed that connecting reading and writing has positive effects and that the checklist helps students consider genre and efficiently integrate the reading and writing processes. Bhan and Gupta (2010) on the other hand examined study habits and academic achievement among the students belonging to scheduled caste and non-scheduled caste group. The results revealed that sex has no significant impact on the study habits and academic achievement of students.

Higginbotham (1999), examined the reading interests of middle school-sixth, seventh, and eighth grade-students in a metropolitan, public school located in a south-eastern state Atlanta, Georgia. The result of this study showed differences in interest by gender, which are congruent with many society's stereotypes, and females reported a stronger interest in Romance, Friendship, Animal Stories, Adventure, and Historical Fiction, while the males reported stronger preferences for the categories of Sports and Science. Also, the male respondents had a stronger preference for non-fiction than did the female respondents. A similar study undertaken by Owusu-Acheaw (2014) assessed the reading habits among students and their effects on their academic performance. The study was conducted in Koforidua Polytechnic situated in the Eastern Region of Ghana. A questionnaire was used for the data collection. The findings showed that majority of the respondents acknowledge the importance of reading, 81.9% of the respondents neither read novel nor fiction within the last two semesters while 62.0% of the respondents only read for the purpose of passing examination. The study confirmed that reading habit has influence on academic performance and there is a relationship between reading habit and academic performance.

In a related study, Mohammed and Amponsah (2018) investigated the predominant factors contributing to low reading abilities of pupils at Elsie Lund Basic School in the Tamale Metropolis, Ghana. The study used a purposive sampling technique to select twelve (12) classroom teachers of the Elsie Lund Basic School. The findings of the study showed that the following were factors contributing to the low reading abilities of the pupils: their lack of confidence to practice how to read in class, poor motivation from teachers and parents to help develop the interest of the pupils in reading, lack of pre-reader books in school and at home, lack of library, teachers' inadequate knowledge on phonemic awareness strategy of teaching reading, lack of

reading clubs and lack of reading competition among the pupils in the school. The study recommended that teachers should build the confidence level of the pupils in reading through making them read cooperatively, the school authority should supply adequate pre-reader books to facilitate the teaching and learning of reading in the school, parents should ensure adequate supply of pre-reader books at home, parents should also reward and complement their children for improving upon their reading abilities, the school should organise reading competitions among pupils and the school management partnering with the Ghana Education Service to organize in-service training for all language teachers on phonemic awareness strategy in teaching reading skills.

Nyarko et al. (2018) used a cross-sectional survey design to examine the influence of reading proficiency on the academic performance of lower primary school children in Accra. The study sampled 383 participants (Grades 1-3) in Accra. Results of the study showed that reading proficiency was significantly and positively related with children's performance on all standard performance tests after controlling for paternal involvement, maternal involvement, financial situation, and age.

Above all, Owu-Ewie (2014) determined the readability of comprehension passages in Junior High School (JHS) English language textbooks used in Ghana and also examined what can be done to improve L2 text writing in Ghana to make materials readable. Using 48 comprehension passages from four different sets of JHS 1-3 English language textbooks. It was found that most of the passages were above the age of learners and were therefore difficult for them to read and comprehend. Through interviews, the study examined ways that writing of JHS English textbooks can be improved to enhance readability. It was revealed that readability can be improved by the use of simple, precise and unambiguous sentences, well-structured text and use of familiar or cultural-friendly texts/genres.

Based on the following elaborations and discussions from previous pieces of literature, there is no singular context that focuses on the current study's perspective. Also, there was no particular study that dwells on the idea locally. With this in mind, the researcher pursued such a study.

## **2.9 Chapter Summary**

The chapter analysed and discussed the relevant literature related to the topic understudy. Thus, the chapter reviewed the pertinent literature for the study while drawing on earlier research and practice to improve a coherent conceptual and theoretical framework suitable for reading skills. Conceptual, empirical, and theoretical viewpoints were used to review the literature.



## CHAPTER THREE

### RESEARCH METHODS

#### 3.0 Introduction

This section provides an overview of the research methods employed to investigate the research questions. It covers several key aspects, including the research approach, research design, study site or area, study population, sample selection, sampling technique, data collection instruments, the validity and reliability of these instruments, as well as ethical considerations. Additionally, the chapter delves into the data analysis methods employed to analyse the field data. Finally, a summary of the chapter is provided.

#### 3.1 Research Approach

In order to address the research questions and objectives, this study adopted a qualitative research approach. Qualitative research, as defined by Nkwi, Nyamongo, and Ryan (2001, p.1), involves the collection and analysis of data that do not possess ordinal values. This encompasses working with various forms of data such as texts, images, and audio. According to Shuttleworth (2008), qualitative research paradigms are particularly valuable when a subject is complex and requires a nuanced understanding beyond simple yes or no answers. Therefore, qualitative research is not suitable for straightforward and uncomplicated problems. Berg and Howard (2012) explain that qualitative research encompasses concepts, definitions, metaphors, symbols, and descriptive accounts. This indicates that qualitative research provides the necessary tools for eliciting recall and facilitating problem-solving. Similarly, Merriam (2009, p.13) asserts that qualitative researchers aim to comprehend the meanings constructed by individuals and how they make sense of their world and experiences. While some researchers, like Silverman (2010) argue that qualitative research

approaches may neglect contextual sensitivities and overly focus on meanings and experiences, the advantages of qualitative research outweigh the disadvantages.

Based on the aforementioned discussions, it can be justified that the qualitative research approach is suitable for conducting the subject matter. This study employed the qualitative research approach due to its capacity for in-depth exploration and description. This approach allows for diverse responses and can adapt to emerging developments or issues during the research process itself (Tannor, 2004). Therefore, the qualitative approach was chosen to gather rich information and achieve a deeper understanding of the subject under study, specifically the reading skills on students' writing. This approach is well-suited for uncovering complex understanding, opinions, attitudes, and often revealing hidden beliefs and perceptions related to the topic of investigation, as is required in this study.

### **3.2 Research Design**

The research design employed in this study aims to establish a suitable framework for investigating the impact of reading skills on students' writing, with Amuman M/A Basic School serving as the case study site. Wiredu (1996) defines the research design as a comprehensive description of the procedures and methods utilized by the researcher in their work. Similarly, Malhotra and Birks (2003) state that a research design functions as a blueprint or framework for a research project, guiding the collection and analysis of data. Essentially, the research design ensures the accurate and efficient collection of data that aligns with the research questions at hand.

In this study, the research design employed was a case study. According to Creswell (2014), a case study involves a thorough empirical investigation of a phenomenon within its real-life context, utilizing extensive data collection methods.

Miles and Huberman (1994, p. 25) define a case as a bounded context where a particular phenomenon occurs. In this study, the unit of analysis was English Language teachers, representing a bounded system (Merriam, 2009). Unlike quantitative research, case study researchers, as described by Kusi (2012) citing Cohen, Manion, and Morrison (2007), do not aim to discover generalizable truth or establish cause-and-effect relationships. Instead, they focus on describing, explaining, and evaluating a phenomenon. By extensively examining a teaching and learning environment and the participants involved, the researcher gains a deeper understanding of the topic. Through an in-depth case study, the researcher presents a comprehensive description of the events under investigation, enhancing our understanding of the phenomenon (Stake, 2004). The case study approach was chosen for its flexibility, allowing the use of multiple instruments to gather data from English Language teachers and students in their natural context. As English Language holds significant importance in students' academic progress and serves as a lifelong language extensively used for communication, it is crucial for students to master the rules governing it. Therefore, adopting a case study approach was deemed appropriate to gather data on the influence of reading skills on students' writing, using Amuman M/A Basic School students and English teachers as participants.

### **3.3 Research Population**

The target population in a research study refers to the entire group of individuals or objects that are of interest to the researcher for generalizing the study's conclusions (Castillo, 2009). In the context of this study, the target population focused on students and English language teachers at Amuman M/A Basic School, located in the Ga South Municipal, Accra. According to the Ghana Demographic Profile (2012), basic school children constitute a significant proportion of Ghana's population, accounting for



36.5%. Therefore, it is essential to focus on this segment of the population within the educational sector. The unit of analysis for this study was limited to 125 students in form one and two, along with three English teachers at Amuman M/A Basic School. Among the teachers, is female and the remaining two are male. Hence, the target population for the study consisted of 128 individuals, including 61 male students, 64 female students, and 3 teachers.

### **3.4 Sampling Procedure**

Sampling is a critical aspect of research, as highlighted by Fraenkel and Wallen (2012), who emphasize the need for a strategy to determine which units should be measured and included in a study, while excluding others from the research population. According to Stake (2009), the sample used for this purpose must be representative of the larger population from which it was drawn. Careful consideration must be given to the method of data collection and the source of the data, as no amount of analysis can compensate for improperly gathered data.

For this study, a purposive sampling technique was used to select the units of analysis. The focus of the study was on Form 1 and 2 students and English teachers at Amuman M/A Basic School. A total of 125 students and 3 English teachers were identified from the school based on their expertise on the subject matter. The purposive sampling approach was chosen given the limited time and resources available, and the need to focus on individuals who were most likely to offer relevant and meaningful information for the study (Leedy & Ormrod, 2018). The English teachers who were selected for the study were chosen based on their experience and qualifications in teaching English to secondary school students. Additionally, the students were chosen based on their proficiency levels in the language and their previous performance in English language subject (Leedy & Ormrod, 2018). For instance, the students who were

identified for the study were those who had consistently performed well in previous English language classes.

According to Creswell & Creswell (2018), the purposive sampling technique offers several advantages, including its efficiency and cost-effectiveness in selecting targeted participants for a study. Creswell & Creswell (2018) add that this approach also ensures that the sample consists of individuals who have the necessary knowledge and expertise to provide relevant and insightful information for the research. However, the use of purposive sampling has certain limitations. For instance, it may result in a biased sample if the researcher's selection criteria are subjective and not clearly defined. Additionally, statistical inferences cannot be made from the sample to the broader population, which may pose challenges in terms of generalization (Creswell & Creswell, 2018).

In the end, a total of 56 students (35 Form 2 students and 21 Form 1 students) and two teachers (one from each class) were included in the study. The participants were selected based on the subject matter and their willingness to participate in the research. The sample consisted of 34 male students and 22 female students, who together provided valuable insights into the reading-related issues that were the focus of the study.

### **3.5 Data Collection Instruments**

Data gathering is crucial in research, as it is meant to contribute to a better understanding of a theoretical framework (Bernard, 2002). Data collection in this study was done through interviews with students and teachers, classroom observation of instructional methods as well as reading assessment/assignment by the students.

### 3.5.1 Interviews

The data collection method employed in this study was unstructured interviews, which involved face-to-face interactions between the interviewer and the participants. This approach provided the researcher with control over the process while allowing the respondents the freedom to express their thoughts (O’Leary, 2004). The interview guide was designed using open-ended questions to facilitate further probing and encourage in-depth discussions. In particular, the interviews were conducted with both students and teachers to explore the underlying factors influencing reading skills on students’ writing. The aim was to gain a comprehensive understanding of the subject matter.

In this study, in-depth interviews were conducted, drawing from the viewpoint of Guion, Diehl, and McDonald (2013) who highlight the effectiveness of qualitative interviews for program planning and evaluation. These interviews used an open-ended and discovery-oriented approach, allowing the interviewer to delve deeply into the respondents’ perspectives on a specific subject, in this case, reading. By adopting in-depth interviews, the researcher had the opportunity to thoroughly explore the students’ feelings and perceptions regarding their reading habit or a skill. This approach facilitated a comprehensive understanding of their experiences and perspectives on the topic.

The interviews conducted in this study utilized an unstructured approach, with questions starting with “why” or “how.” This allowed the respondents to freely express their thoughts and use their own words. The decision to use unstructured questions was influenced by Guion et al.’s (2013) recommendation that interview questions should go beyond simple “yes” or “no” responses. Each interview had a duration of 15-20 minutes to prevent boredom or interviewer fatigue. To capture the interview responses accurately, recordings were made with the participants’ permission, and field notes

were taken by the researcher. The participants were assured that the recordings were solely for academic purposes, establishing rapport and building confidence. Data collection took place in the last term of the academic year, ensuring that the students had already covered reading comprehension and could provide informed and meaningful responses.

### **3.5.2 Classroom Observation**

The classroom observations focused on examining the pedagogical and instructional strategies employed by teachers, which directly contributed to the challenges students faced in English writings. By observing teachers' practices, it was possible to evaluate their understanding and integration of reading comprehension principles into their teaching methods, thereby addressing the research questions effectively.

The data collected through classroom observation served as a complementary source of information to validate the findings obtained from interviews and the analysis of student reading assessment and essays writing regarding their difficulties with identifying of words. To conduct the classroom observations, an observational guide was developed to ensure consistency and systematic data collection. It is crucial to note that the true purpose of the research was not disclosed to any of the classroom elements, including the teachers. The researcher presented herself as a student in the school, with the intention of observing and learning general teaching methodologies. This approach was necessary to avoid any potential bias or altered behavior from the teachers, as they might have acted differently if they were aware of being observed specifically regarding their teaching of reading comprehension.

### **3.5.3 Reading Assessment**

The reading assessment by the students was used as a data source to assess the accuracy of their reading skills, which was pertinent to addressing research questions one and two. Specifically, the analysis focused on the reading passage of the students (Anatri, 2017). Writing skills, on the other hand, involve the ability to construct meaningful ideas through written work (Ginanjari, 2015). In this study, students were provided with a narrative prompt related to their favourite food. By analyzing the students' writings, it was possible to evaluate their proficiency in expressing themselves in terms of their preferred foods and to identify any challenges encountered with writing. This approach provided valuable insights into the students' reading comprehension and its application on their writings.

### **3.6 Reliability and Validity of Instruments**

When considering the validity of data, it is crucial to ensure its plausibility, credibility, reliability, and defensibility when faced with challenges. In this study, these principles were taken into account during the design of the interview and observation guides through a process of pre-testing. Four types of validity were specifically addressed: descriptive validity, interpretive validity, theoretical validity, and construct validity. Descriptive validity refers to the accuracy of the reported behaviours, events, objects, and settings as observed or heard by the researcher. It ensures that the reported information aligns with what actually occurred. Interpretive validity focuses on the accuracy of the researcher's interpretations regarding the thoughts, opinions, feelings, intentions, and experiences of the subjects. It aims to ensure a comprehensive understanding of the subjects' perspectives. Theoretical validity assesses the consistency between the developed theoretical explanations and the data, emphasizing reliability and defensibility. Lastly, construct validity examines the extent to which a

test measures what it intends to measure. Through the pretesting of instruments, potential challenges were identified and addressed to enhance the validity of the main study's findings.

### **3.7 Data Analysis**

The essays of the students underwent a literary analysis using the approach of critical discourse analysis. Literary analysis involves a close examination of a text, interpreting its meanings, and exploring the author's choices and intentions, regardless of the literary form, such as novels, short stories, plays, or poems (Caulfield, 2022). Critical discourse analysis, on the other hand, is a method used to analyze written or spoken language and significant events (Stubbs, 1983). In this study, written discourse analysis was conducted on the comprehension reading from the students' reading assessment. Critical discourse analysis encompasses various types, including argumentative, narrative, descriptive, and exposition (Baker, 2006). For this study, narrative discourse analysis was employed, which is used when the composer aims to convey their opinions, experiences, and encounters to the audience through logical reasoning and appealing to their sense of reason. Narrative discourse analysis was chosen to examine the essays as students are required to carefully examine and present each part of their ideas.

The interview data underwent inductive thematic analysis. Inductive thematic analysis involves coding and theme development guided by the content of the data itself (Braun & Clarke, 2006). In analysing the qualitative data, the following steps were followed: thoroughly reading through the interview responses to identify patterns or themes among the participants. When multiple themes were identified, the researcher attempted to group them in a meaningful manner, such as by categorizing them according to the errors made in their writings and reading.

### **3.8 Ethical Considerations**

Ethical considerations play a crucial role in any research study, particularly those involving human subjects, as emphasized by McNamara (1994). Participants have the right to be informed about the research purpose, its potential impact on them, the associated risks and benefits, and the option to decline participation. In this study, strict adherence to the principle of voluntary participation was maintained during the data collection phase. This was done to uphold participant privacy and ensure their safety.

The research process in this study considered several significant ethical issues, including obtaining respondents' consent, ensuring confidentiality and anonymity, and promoting voluntary participation. In order to obtain the consent of the selected participants, the researcher provided a clear explanation of the study's aims and purpose. To safeguard the anonymity of the respondents, both teachers and students were instructed not to disclose their names during the interviews. Instead, index numbers were assigned to ensure their comfort and privacy throughout the study. Only participants who willingly agreed to participate, after being fully informed about the study's objectives and methodology, were included in the targeted sample. All participants had the right to decline participation or withdraw from the interview at any stage.

### **3.9 Chapter Summary**

This chapter focused on the data collection and analysis methods employed in the study. The research design used was a case study approach with a qualitative analysis approach. The study involved a sample of 56 students and 2 teachers selected from form 1 & 2 of Amuman M/A Basic School using a multi-stage sampling technique. Data was collected through interviews, observations, and essay tests. Prior

to the main data collection, the instruments were pilot tested to ensure their validity and reliability.





## CHAPTER FOUR

### DATA ANALYSIS AND PRESENTATION

#### 4.0 Introduction

This chapter presents the qualitative analysis of the data from the students and English teachers of Amuman M/A Basic School. The analysis involved the categorisation of the data into common themes and presentation of the results in sections based on the research questions of the study. The data that were used for this study were gathered from document review, classroom observation and interviews. The sections focused on the data analysed and presented in respect of the following research questions:

1. What are the various teaching methods used in teaching reading comprehension to the students?
2. What are the main problems encountered by Amuman M/A Basic School when reading comprehension?
3. How does reading positively affect students' English writing performance?

#### 4.1 Research Question 1: What are the various teaching methods used in teaching reading comprehension to students?

This section explored the various teaching methods used in teaching reading comprehension to the students. The section was largely explored using classroom observation. The following methods were used by the teachers to teach reading comprehension: the Phonics Method and the Whole-word Approach.

During the classroom observation, the researcher examined complete reading comprehension lessons from beginning to end. The researcher identified three main teaching methods employed by the teachers for teaching reading comprehension: the

phonics method, the whole-word approach and the language experience method. The teacher began the lesson by reviewing previous phonics lessons, ensuring that the students had a good foundation in recognizing and pronouncing different sounds. This included practicing letter-sound associations and blending sounds together to form words. The teacher used flashcards and word charts to engage the students in hands-on activities, making the learning process interactive and enjoyable. After, the teacher introduced new phonetic patterns and rules by writing them on the whiteboard and explaining them clearly. In contrast, the whole-word approach began by the teacher introducing a new sight word – “sun”. He displayed a flashcard with the word and asked the students to repeat after her. He then showed the students a picture of the sun and asked them to associate the word with the image. The teacher distributed a worksheet to each student. The worksheet contained a series of sentences with missing words. The students were instructed to fill in the blanks with the correct sight words. The choice of using the phonics approach may be appropriate for lower-level learners who require a solid foundation when learning a new language concept or for learners who are accustomed to traditional teaching methods and may struggle to identify rules independently. The teacher opted for the phonics approach as it allows for a more memorable discovery process and tends to motivate students better compared to the whole-word approach. In this approach, the teacher initially provided students with the reading comprehension rules, followed by examples. Consequently, students acquired knowledge of the rules without explicit presentation. Additionally, the other teacher also adopted the inductive approach, where students were tasked with recognizing of whole words rather than decoding individual phonemes or letter-sound relationships themselves. In this scenario, the teacher presented examples first and prompted students to discover the violated rules.

The findings align with National Reading Panel Report (2000) assertion that phonics approach is slightly more effective than whole-word approach. However, it is suggested that combining both phonics and whole-word approaches can yield the best results. Andrews (2007) explains that when using the phonics approach, teachers focus on teaching students the relationship between letters and sounds in order to improve their reading comprehension. This approach involves explicitly instructing students on how to decode words by presenting them with rules and patterns. For example, teachers would teach students that the letter “s” often makes the /s/ sound, and they can use this knowledge to sound out words like “snake” or “sun.” By explicitly teaching these phonics rules, students are able to better understand and comprehend written texts. On the other hand, the whole-word approach emphasizes the recognition and memorization of entire words as a way to enhance reading comprehension. Instead of breaking words down into individual sounds, teachers provide students with a bank of high-frequency words that they learn to recognize instantly. For instance, students would learn to quickly identify words like “the,” “and,” or “said” without having to decode them letter by letter. By memorizing these common words, students can read more fluently and comprehend texts more easily. However, the pedagogical treatment of reading comprehension structures by teachers has shown limited effectiveness due to their reliance on a single fixed approach, instead of incorporating different techniques derived from various teaching models. Nevertheless, Akinbode (2009) suggests that English teachers should adopt a dynamic approach to instructional techniques for reading comprehension to improve overall writing skills of students.

Furthermore, in some cases where teachers attempted to engage students, they utilized simplistic and unrealistic examples. Consequently, students struggled to relate these examples to real linguistic contexts, making it nearly impossible for them to apply

the concepts to their own writing. This aligns with Cain, Oakhill & Bryant (2004) claim that an inadequate pedagogical approach to language instruction has contributed to the challenges students face with reading comprehension. Thus, it becomes evident that some of the difficulties students encounter in reading stem primarily from flawed instructional materials and the pedagogical deficiencies of teachers. This supports Ehri et al.'s (2001) assertion that students' struggles with reading to identify new vocabularies might be attributed to ineffective teaching methods employed by certain teachers. Furthermore, classroom observations revealed that students were less engaged, showing minimal participation and reluctance to speak up or read aloud. This was primarily attributed to their low confidence levels, which in turn contributed to poor performance in their writing skills.

#### **4.2 Research Question 2: What are the main problems encountered by Amuman M/A Basic School when reading comprehension?**

This research question sought to identify the main problems encountered by Amuman M/A Basic school students in reading comprehension. The problems emerged as the following sub-categories: (a) poor in vocabulary mastery, (b) trouble with fluency and (c) issues with background knowledge. The researcher represented T1 as the male teacher and T2 as the female teacher. Further explanation of these problems is provided in the following sections.

##### **4.2.1 Poor in Vocabulary Mastery**

All interviewed teachers agreed that students who struggle with reading comprehension exhibit a significantly limited vocabulary knowledge or proficiency, which directly hinders their understanding of texts. T1 (Male teacher) stressed lack of vocabulary as a problem for her students by sharing that:

*Vocabulary definitely is a big one. There are too many words in a text that they don't know or that they don't know well enough such that they can occur automatically during reading. Comprehension definitely is affected by lack of vocabulary.*

The statement provided by the teacher highlights the significant impact of vocabulary on reading comprehension. It suggests that her students face difficulties when encountering unfamiliar or insufficiently known words while reading, leading to a negative effect on their overall comprehension abilities. This observation aligns with Cain et al. (2004) who found that vocabulary knowledge was a key predictor of reading comprehension skills in both children and adults. They concluded that individuals with a larger vocabulary had better comprehension abilities, as they were able to understand the meaning of more words in context. Moreover, research has shown that vocabulary knowledge contributes not only to comprehension but also to other aspects of language development, such as writing and speaking skills. A study by Nagy and Anderson (1984) emphasized the significance of vocabulary in these areas, suggesting that a rich and diverse vocabulary enhances overall language proficiency.

T<sub>2</sub> described her students by stating that:

*“They also have limited vocabulary, and so when you introduce a new word, they will not always be able to pronounce, they will not have any experience with the word. They will not even recognize it.”*

Here, the teacher's statement highlights the students' limited vocabulary, specifically in terms of pronunciation, familiarity, and recognition of new words. This suggests that the students may struggle with accurately pronouncing unfamiliar words, lack prior experience with the words, and have difficulty recognizing them when encountered. This analysis aligns with the finding of Perfetti and Hart

(2002) found that vocabulary size strongly predicted word recognition skills in both children and adults. Thus, students with a larger vocabulary were more likely to accurately recognize and pronounce words due to their familiarity with a wider range of terms. Moreover, familiarity with words plays a significant role in comprehension. Stahl and Fairbanks (1986) highlighted the importance of word familiarity in reading comprehension. Students who were familiar with a greater number of words demonstrated better comprehension abilities, as they were able to access the meanings of those words in context.

The teacher confirmed that her students lack academic vocabulary, which prevents them from comprehending a text. T2 pointed out that:

*“We talk very differently in a school setting than some of these students’ homes. Even just the dialect is very different. Yeah, if they are not exposed to academic English, it’s going to be a challenge.”*

The above statement by the teacher highlights the students’ lack of academic vocabulary and the potential challenges they face in comprehending texts due to differences in dialect and exposure to academic English. This observation emphasizes the importance of academic language proficiency and its impact on reading comprehension. Several studies support this analysis and provide insights into the relationship between academic vocabulary, language variation, and comprehension.

The finding is consistent with assertions made by several previous studies. Snow and Uccelli (2009) demonstrated that proficiency in academic language is a strong predictor of academic success, including reading comprehension. Similarly, vocabulary instruction that targets academic words and phrases, along with explicit instruction on the features of academic language, has been found to be effective in enhancing students’

reading comprehension (Baumann et al., 2010). Furthermore, dialectal variations, such as differences in pronunciation, vocabulary, and grammar, can also pose challenges for students when they encounter academic English as indicated by the teacher. Dialectal differences can affect students' understanding of academic texts due to variations in vocabulary usage, sentence structure, and discourse patterns (Gee, 2004). This can hinder comprehension and lead to difficulties in fully grasping the meaning and nuances of the text.

Both teachers highlighted that difficulty with vocabulary might take different forms. These forms include multiple meaning words and multiple shape and size of the words. Regarding multiple meaning words, T<sub>1</sub> emphasized that:

*With the student, we were reading about something with a forest and a pond and they were talking about the bank of the pond, and when they didn't understand bank had multiple meanings, they weren't understanding the bank around the water, all they could think was a bank. What's a bank? "It's like, that's where you go to get money or something." So, it wasn't going with the right context of the story. So especially when you have multiple meaning words, my student would have difficulty connecting it to the reading it makes no sense to them.*

Here, the above statement also highlights the challenge students face when encountering words with multiple meanings and their difficulty in connecting those meanings to the appropriate context within a text. This finding aligns with assertions made by previous studies such as Cain et al. (2004) and Nagy & Anderson (1984). According to Cain et al. (2004) when readers encounter a word with multiple meanings, they struggle to select the appropriate meaning that aligns with the context of the text.

This can lead to confusion, misinterpretation, and hindered comprehension (Nagy and Anderson, 1984). Furthermore, vocabulary knowledge and word sense disambiguation skills are essential for successfully navigating multiple meaning words. Students with a robust vocabulary and developed word sense disambiguation abilities are more likely to accurately discern the intended meaning of a word based on context (McCutchen & Perfetti, 1982).

In this regard, the teacher helped his students by providing them with different example of text and words. T<sub>1</sub> added that:

*“If I do not show different types of text and words with their sizes, it will affect the students' comprehension. Because I know if I keep the word in insolation meaning, if they see the word and just write in one certain way, they can recall it but when it changes in a different book or a different setting, it becomes a problem or challenge and it may affect their comprehension and their fluency, and they won't be able to read and understand.”*

The teacher's statement emphasizes the importance of exposing students to different types of texts and words with variations in size (e.g., font size) to enhance comprehension. The teacher recognizes that solely focusing on isolated word meanings may limit students' ability to recall and understand words in different contexts, ultimately impacting their overall reading comprehension and fluency. This perspective aligns with research on the role of contextualized vocabulary instruction and its impact on reading comprehension. This assertion was in line the findings of Beck & McKeown (2001) who found that vocabulary knowledge is not simply the memorization of isolated words but involves understanding how words are used in different situation. McKeown (2007) highlights the importance of encountering words in context to fully



grasp their meanings and usage. range of vocabulary in different contexts, enhancing their ability to understand and use words flexibly. Moreover, the teacher's concern about the impact of word variation on comprehension and fluency is supported by research. Vocabulary instruction that includes explicit teaching of word forms, such as different word sizes, contributes to improved reading fluency (Rasinski, 2004). Exposure to words in different sizes helps students recognize and understand words in various print environments, leading to more fluid reading experiences. Harmon (2002) found that students faced difficulties in reading comprehension due to the limited vocabulary. Mastering vocabulary is proved increasing students' ability in comprehending a text. It is therefore, necessary for students to properly comprehend the words or vocabulary in order to be able to decode the message. The relationship of vocabulary knowledge and reading comprehension is well established, in which vocabulary is a predictor of students' reading comprehension.

Additionally, Ricketts, Nation, and Bishop (2007) found that the limited amount of vocabulary knowledge that the students have could limit their understanding of a text, especially when the text contains unfamiliar vocabulary. Also, when compared to students with high comprehension skills, students with low comprehension exhibited vocabulary deficits and were only able to read fewer exception vocabulary.

#### **4.2.2 Lack of Reading Fluency**

Based on the responses of the teachers, inadequate reading fluency among students emerges as another significant obstacle that adversely affects their students' reading comprehension. This poor reading fluency manifests in two distinct forms: fast reading and slow reading. Both interviewed teachers concurred that a lack of fluency and difficulties in decoding words at a slow pace have a detrimental impact on their

students' ability to comprehend what they read. T<sub>1</sub> further elaborated on this matter, stating:

*I think a lot of students that I've taught have a lot of problem with just decoding. So, in most cases it seems their brain capacity and brain power are more focused on decoding the word than comprehending the passage or text, so a lot of times decoding actually gets in the way of comprehension.*

The statement made by the teacher relates to the common phenomenon of decoding difficulties interfering with reading comprehension. Research has consistently shown that decoding and comprehension are interconnected skills that rely on each other for successful reading. Dysfunctional decoding processes can hinder comprehension and impact academic performance (Shankweiler and Fowler, 2004; Kendeou et al., 2008). Therefore, the assertion made by the teacher aligns with various studies that have highlighted the detrimental effects of decoding difficulties on reading comprehension. Students who struggle with decoding may allocate excessive cognitive resources to word identification, leaving limited capacity for higher-level comprehension processes.

T<sub>1</sub> describing his students assert that:

*They are just slow reader. They are slow to get the concept. So, when they having difficulties decoding, their reading is so choppy and slow, they begin to lose or forget the meaning of the sentence.*

Here, the teacher describes his students as slow readers who have difficulties decoding text, resulting in choppy and slow reading. He also suggests that these difficulties hinder their understanding and they may even forget the meaning of the sentence. He added that:

*My students mostly comprehend a reading concept when I read them a story and then we discuss about it. They can answer questions because they are listening. They have the capacity to comprehend, but it is when they are reading in such a choppy way, and so slowly, then they start to lose the meaning.*

Here, the statement suggests that the students understand a reading concept better when it is introduced through storytelling and followed by a discussion. By hearing the story, the students are able to listen and grasp the content, allowing them to answer questions related to the reading. However, the teacher also notes that when the students read the same text independently, they struggle with comprehension. This seems to occur when they read in a choppy and slow manner, causing them to lose the overall meaning of the text. The teacher's observation highlights the importance of different instructional approaches and the impact they can have on student comprehension. It indicates that the students have the capacity to comprehend the content, as demonstrated during the storytelling and discussion sessions. However, when left to read on their own, they encounter difficulties.

T<sub>2</sub> also explained how slow readers do not comprehend a text well by sharing that:

*They are not able to understand what they read because they spend so much energy and process on trying to figure out what the word is, they just lose the meaning, this because they do not put all together.*

The above statement suggests that slow readers struggle with comprehension because they invest a significant amount of mental effort in deciphering individual words, leaving them unable to grasp the overall meaning of the text. Furthermore, it also implies that these readers fail to synthesize the information effectively. This

explanation aligns with the general understanding of reading difficulties. Slow readers often face challenges in decoding words, which can hinder their reading fluency and impact their comprehension (Smith & Johnson, 2015). Smith & Johnson (2015) argued that When readers are preoccupied with word recognition and struggle to identify or pronounce words, they may lose track of the context and struggle to comprehend the text as a whole.

The two teachers together shared that they utilize rereading strategy and modeling in order to help their slow reading students with fluency in order to improve their comprehension. T<sub>1</sub> stated that how he helps his students:

*A lot of times, just rereading passages, rereading practice, providing a good model for them, so I will read it, so that they can hear where I pause, the intonation, and then say, “can you read it and make it sound like me.*

Here, the teacher emphasized the importance of providing students with multiple opportunities to reread passages and practice. By reading the text himself and modeling proper intonation and pauses, he helps students improve their reading skills. Additionally, she encourages students to mimic her reading style, allowing them to develop their own fluency and comprehension abilities. T<sub>2</sub> pointed out that:

*My students and I do a lot of rereading, or the students will read it, and then I will read it over again, or listen to books on tape if it's a classroom book or something, so they hear it fluently.*

The teacher mentioned that both she engages her students in rereading texts for improved fluency. Additionally, they utilize different techniques such as reading aloud or listening to audiobooks as a class. This approach can help students develop better

reading skills by exposing them to fluent reading models and providing opportunities for practice.

The Two teachers also highlighted that not only slow reading, but also fast reading might be a problem that prevents their students with reading difficulties from comprehending a text. T<sub>1</sub> pointed out that:

*I have had a student who just reads super-fast to get through it because he can read the words, but he goes so quickly that he has no idea what he is read.*

This teacher has noticed a student who reads quickly without comprehending the material. The student is able to decode the words but does not understand the content. This suggests that the student needs to work on their reading comprehension skills to fully understand what they are reading.

T<sub>2</sub> noted that:

*Some students read very fast, but they do not understand what they are reading.*

This statement highlights an important issue in reading comprehension. While some students may possess the ability to read quickly, the key element of understanding the material is often lacking. Reading speed alone does not guarantee comprehension (Hudson, Lane, and Pullen, 2005). It is not uncommon for individuals to skim through a text, absorbing words without fully grasping their meaning or making connections between different concepts. This can be attributed to a variety of factors such as lack of focus, inadequate prior knowledge, distraction, or even reading in a language that is not one's first language. Hudson et al. (2005) found that when students read without comprehending, they miss out on the deeper understanding, critical thinking, and analysis that comes with fully digesting the material. This can have a detrimental impact on their academic performance and overall learning experience.

The findings were similar to the finding of Hudson, Lane, and Pullen (2005), who highlighted that “each aspect of fluency has a clear connection to text comprehension”. They clarified the link between reading fluency and comprehension by stressing that the lack of accuracy and rapidity in word reading reflects readers’ deficit in fluency, which plays a major role in preventing them of gaining access to the meaning of the text. In other words, readers without fluency are at risk of misinterpreting the text. Moreover, the strong correlation that exists between measures of reading fluency and direct measures of reading comprehension highly supports the reasoning of this relationship (Speece and Ritchey, 2005; O’Connor, Bell, Harty, Larkin, Sackor, & Zigmond, 2002). In contrast, having a slow word processing rate can hinder readers’ thinking during the reading process and burden their working memory with their several attempts trying to sound out words, which lead to the interruption their understanding. In other words, instead of focusing on the content of the reading and how words are connected together, slow reading of words and information restricts readers’ attention on letters and vocabularies, which prevents readers of processing information in their working memories for adequate time in order to gain meaning (Chard, Vaughn, & Tyler, 2002; Therrien, 2004). Thus, beside assisting students to rapidly and accurately read and process information, reading fluency plays a critical role in facilitating their reading comprehension.

Reading Fluency allows readers to rapidly process vocabulary units, such as letter sound correspondences into understandable vocabulary, automatically make a connection between words, quickly process information, and thinking about the passage while reading, which all leads to construct the meaning of what they are reading (LaBerge and Samuels, 1974). Having the ability to read rapidly and smoothly assists readers with both decoding and word.

### 4.2.3 Issues with background knowledge

The next problem encountered by students is the lack of background knowledge. The lack of background knowledge refers to the students not having adequate background knowledge and past experience, which are very important to facilitate their reading comprehension of text. Regarding the importance of having background knowledge and life experience. T<sub>2</sub> shared that:

*I think the more life experience they have then the more they can connect those experiences to their reading and build on a knowledge base.*

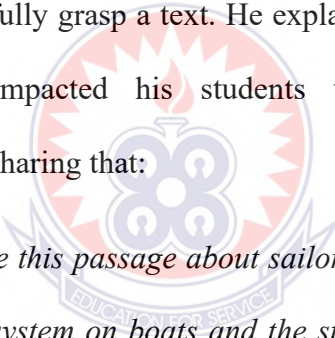
The teacher's statement highlights the importance of life experience in enhancing one's ability to connect personal experiences to reading and build a knowledge base. This analysis suggests that individuals with more life experience are likely to have a broader range of experiences and knowledge to draw upon when engaging with written texts (Guthrie, Anderson, Alao, & Rinehart, 1999). Guthrie et al. (1999) found that when individuals have a diverse range of life experiences, they can relate those experiences to the content they encounter while reading. This connection allows them to make sense of new information, draw parallels, and deepen their understanding.

T<sub>1</sub> was of the view that:

*Background knowledge is important in reading because it builds connections, and what I mean by that specifically is, some students are involved with memorizing and recalling things from their background, and if it's a new story, they relate that to something that happened in their past and that helps build memory and helps them understand and comprehend the story that they are engaged in.*

The statement made by the teacher emphasizes the importance of background knowledge in reading comprehension and highlights how it helps students build connections and understand new stories by relating them to their past experiences. This notion aligns with the assertion made by Pressley and Afflerbach (1995) who suggest that when readers connect text to their own experiences, they are more likely to remember information and comprehend the text deeply. Similarly, Guthrie and Klauda (2014) demonstrated that activating prior knowledge before reading improved comprehension and retention of textual information.

During interviews with the teachers, T<sub>1</sub> that some of his students that encountered reading challenges often lacked sufficient background knowledge, hindering their ability to fully grasp a text. He explained how the lack of background knowledge negatively impacted his students with reading difficulties from comprehending a text by sharing that:



*So, we have this passage about sailors and about when they introduce the steam system on boats and the students did not know some of the vocabulary words. I copied down the passage, it said, for thousands of years, sailors had made their boats go by using sails, and oars. It seemed foolish to believe a boat could be pushed by a steam.” And they did not know what a sailor was. They have never heard that word sailor. They did not know what a sail was or an oar, so all of that can get in the way of understanding what a passage was taking about.*

The teacher’s statement highlights the impact of limited background knowledge on reading comprehension. The example given demonstrates how unfamiliarity with specific vocabulary words, such as “sailor,” “sail,” and “oar,” can hinder understanding



and hinder the overall comprehension of a passage. support this idea, Anderson & Freebody (1981) emphasizes that readers with limited vocabulary knowledge may struggle to understand unfamiliar words, which can impede overall comprehension.

T<sub>1</sub> stressed that students who do not have enough background knowledge and life experiences have nothing to connect the new information with, which makes the new information hard to understand. He also described how this problem negatively influenced the students by sharing that

*They have no frame of reference for the new information. They do not have previous knowledge to build upon. So, for example, one of the students that I had did not know the rules of baseball, did not know the rules of the game, did not know what the word “strike” meant, did not know what an out was and so, therefore, did not know how that character felt when they were struck out or gotten out.*

The teacher’s observation highlights the negative impact of lacking background knowledge on students’ comprehension and engagement with a text. This was supported by Carrell and Eisterhold (1983) found that readers with more background knowledge on a topic were better able to comprehend and recall information from a text on that topic. In the absence of prior knowledge, students may struggle to understand and make sense of new information, as seen in the example of the student who lacked knowledge about the rules of baseball. Similarly, William (1993) was of the view that adolescents with learning disabilities brought incorrect or irrelevant information into the story and have difficulty understanding the text. Also, William (1993) found that when these students were asked to respond to inferential questions, they resorted to either totally depend on their previous knowledge or disregarded their previous

knowledge (William, 1993). Other researchers have similarly found that, although some students with reading disabilities may have prior knowledge about the topic of a reading, they usually fail to appropriately use that knowledge in order to facilitate their understanding of the new textual information (Graham & Bellert, 2005). Therefore, they need to be taught some pre-reading activities to be able to activate their own prior knowledge about a given topic.

### **4.3 Research Question 3: How does reading positively affect students' English writing performance?**

This section assessed the effect of reading skills on students' English writing skills. The major effect from the perspective of the students and teachers which was revealed during the interview were enhanced vocabulary, improved Sentence Structure and Grammar, exposure to different writing styles and genres and increased writing creativity.

#### **4.3.1 Enhanced Vocabulary**

Extensive reading on the part of the students has an effect on their vocabulary. Most of the students said:

*“Since I started reading more, my writing has improved because I've learned new words and phrases that I can use in my essays.”*

The above statement suggests that the student's writing has improved as a result of reading more. This can be attributed to two main factors mentioned in the statement: acquiring new vocabulary and learning new phrases. This implies that reading extensively exposes students to a wide range of words and their contextual usage. Graham & Hebert (2010) argued that this exposure helps expand their vocabulary, enabling them to express themselves more precisely and effectively in their writing. By

encountering new words in various contexts, readers gain a better understanding of their meanings and nuances. This understanding allows students to select the most suitable words to convey their ideas, ultimately enhancing the quality and depth of their written work. This was supported by T<sub>1</sub>. He said:

*“I have noticed a significant improvement in most of my students’ use of descriptive language in their compositions.”*

The statement made by the teacher suggests that there has been a significant improvement in the students’ use of descriptive language. This implies that the students have shown progress in their ability to employ descriptive elements, such as vivid adjectives, sensory details, and figurative language, to enhance the quality and depth of their compositions. Furthermore, the teacher’s assessment of the students’ use of descriptive language suggests that they have evaluated multiple compositions and identified a positive change in this specific aspect of their writing. This evaluation could involve analyzing the students’ use of descriptive language across various writing assignments, noting improvements in comparison to previous work or benchmarks (Cunningham & Stanovich, 1997).

Similarly, the statement indirectly implies that the teacher’s instruction and guidance may have played a role in fostering the students’ improvement in using descriptive language. The teacher’s feedback, lessons, and exercises related to descriptive writing may have contributed to the observed progress. This finding is in line with the assertion made by Kim, Petscher, Schatschneider, and Foorman (2010), who found that students with stronger reading abilities tend to exhibit higher levels of writing competency. However, another student lamented that:

*“I struggle to find the right words to express myself in my writing.”*

Here, the student's statement suggests that some of the students have difficulty with their writing skills, specifically in finding appropriate words to effectively communicate their thoughts and ideas. This indicates that the student may lack vocabulary skills or encounter challenges in effectively expressing themselves through written language. The statement highlights the connection between reading and writing skills. Reading plays a crucial role in developing one's writing abilities by expanding vocabulary, enhancing language proficiency, and exposing individuals to different writing styles and techniques (Krashen, 1993). Krashen (1993) adds that strong reading skills enable students to recognize and internalize various sentence structures, grammar rules, and writing conventions, facilitating their ability to express themselves coherently through writing. Stahl & Nagy (2006) argue that when students struggle with finding the right words in their writing, it often suggests a limited vocabulary or a lack of exposure to diverse reading materials. In such cases, their writing may lack depth, precision, and clarity. Insufficient reading practice or a lack of engagement with different genres can impede the development of a robust vocabulary and hinder a writer's ability to convey their thoughts effectively.

In all, the interviews revealed that students who indulged in extensive reading demonstrated a more diverse and nuanced vocabulary compared to those who did not engage in regular reading. This improved vocabulary translated into their writing, enabling them to express themselves more effectively and eloquently. The Teachers noted that students with a wide range of vocabulary were able to use appropriate words and phrases to convey complex ideas and concepts accurately.

#### **4.3.2 Improved Sentence Structure and Grammar**

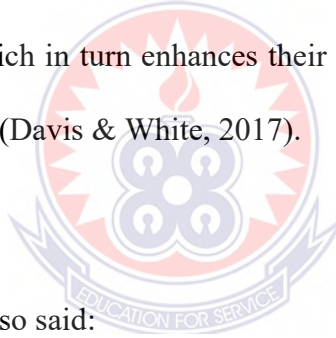
Reading skills have an undeniable impact on students' writing abilities, particularly in terms of sentence structure and grammar (Chall, 1983). According to

Stahl & Nagy (2006), the ability to read extensively and comprehend a range of texts enables students to internalize proper sentence structure and grammatical rules. Thus, honing reading skills ultimately leads to improved sentence structure and grammar, enhancing the overall quality of students' written work.

In line with this, a female student mentioned that effective reading skills has help to improve her sentence structure and grammar. She confirmed that:

“After reading more books, I found it easier to construct complex sentences.”

Here, the above statement suggests that the student experienced improvement in constructing complex sentences as a result of reading more books. This finding aligns with the notion that reading exposes students to various sentence structures, styles, and grammatical patterns, which in turn enhances their ability to construct more complex sentences in their writing (Davis & White, 2017).



Another student also said:

“I don't know where to put commas in my sentences.”

The statement indicates a lack of understanding or knowledge regarding the rules and conventions of using commas in sentence structures. The student's struggle with comma placement may result in run-on sentences or sentences lacking appropriate breaks, making it challenging for readers to understand the intended meaning. It suggests that the student may not be familiar with the specific contexts and guidelines for comma usage, leading to uncertainty and difficulty in incorporating them effectively (Lee, 2019).

T<sub>2</sub> also shared that:

“I have noticed that your writing has become much more polished and error-free after working on your reading skills.”

The teacher’s observation indicates that the student’s writing has evolved and progressed over time. It also implies that reading comprehension and exposure to different written materials have played a significant role in enhancing the student’s writing. By reading more extensively, the student has likely been exposed to different writing styles, sentence structures, and vocabulary, allowing them to internalize these aspects and apply them to their own writing. Furthermore, the statement suggests that the student’s writing has shown improvement in terms of having less errors and a more polished quality. The improvement is attributed to the practice and development of reading skills. This implies that reading has had a positive impact on their writing ability by enhancing their language proficiency, grammar, vocabulary, and overall coherence. The statement also implies that reading has aided the student in improving their ability to identify and correct errors in their writing. Through increased exposure to well-written texts, the student likely developed a greater understanding of spelling, punctuation, and grammar rules, leading to fewer mistakes in their own written work. The finding is in line with assertion made by Adams (2016) who found that students who were avid readers displayed a better understanding of sentence structure and grammar rules. The act of reading exposes them to various sentence patterns and grammatical structures, allowing them to internalize these conventions naturally. As a result, their writing showcased fewer grammatical errors and displayed more cohesive and well-structured sentences (Adams, 2016).

### 4.3.3 Exposure to Different Writing Styles and Genres

The third impact or effect of reading skills on the students' writing, was it has expose them to different writing style and genres. According to Cain, Oakhill & Bryant (2004), exposure to different writing styles and genres plays a crucial role in developing one's writing skills and overall literacy. When individuals engage with a variety of writing styles and genres, they gain a deeper understanding of language conventions, rhetorical strategies, and textual structures (Smith & Johnson, 2018). This exposure can enhance their ability to adapt their writing to different contexts and audiences, fostering effective communication. This was support by most of the student, who said that:

*“We have noticed that reading different genres like mystery novels, biographies, and fantasy stories has helped me become more creative in my own writing.”*

The above statement suggests that reading various genres has positively influenced their creativity in writing. This can be seen as a plausible assertion, as reading different genres exposes individuals to diverse storytelling techniques, themes, and perspectives. Different genres employ varying narrative styles, plot structures, and character development methods. Thus, by engaging with various genres, the student may have learned how to incorporate and adapt these techniques into their own writing, enhancing their creative abilities. Jones & Brown (2018) were of the view that each genre often explores unique themes and presents distinct perspectives on various subjects. This exposure to different ideas can broaden the student's understanding of the world and foster imaginative thinking in their own writing, allowing them to approach topics from fresh angles. Cunningham & Stanovich (1997) argue that reading different genres exposes the student to a range of writing styles and language usage.

This exposure can improve their vocabulary, sentence structures, and overall writing proficiency, enabling them to craft more creative and engaging works.

Another student agreed with the assertion made by his colleagues, he affirmed that:

*“Exploring different writing styles has improved my understanding of sentence structure and helped me write more effectively.”*

Here, the student’s statement reveals that exploring different writing styles has had a positive impact on their understanding of sentence structure and efficacy in writing. Thus, by exploring different writing styles, the student likely encountered various sentence structures, such as simple, compound, complex, or compound-complex sentences. This exposure to diverse sentence structures may have improved their understanding of how sentences can be constructed in different ways to convey meaning effectively. They may have learned how to vary their sentence structures to create a more engaging and coherent piece of writing (Nazzem, 2019). Additionally, Mol & Bus (2011) posit that exploring different writing styles might have exposed the student to different writing techniques and devices that contribute to effective writing. Mol & Bus (2011) were of the view that most students may have learned how to create emphasis through the use of different sentence types, such as using short, punchy sentences for impact or longer, more elaborate sentences to convey complex ideas. Moreover, exposure to different writing styles might have introduced them to rhetorical devices, figurative language, or other elements that can enhance the quality and effectiveness of their writing (Nazzem, 2019).



T<sub>2</sub> also confirmed that:

“Introducing my students to diverse writing styles and genres has positively impacted their writing skills by enhancing their creativity, improving their sentence structure, and expanding their vocabulary.”

The teacher’s confirmation aligns with the student’s statement. This suggests that exposing students to different writing styles and genres has had a positive impact on their writing skills. By being exposed to diverse writing styles and genres, students are likely to encounter a variety of storytelling techniques, descriptive imagery, and unique perspectives. This exposure can stimulate their own creativity and encourage them to experiment with different writing approaches. By studying various writing styles and genres, students can learn how authors use sentence structure to create rhythm, pace, and emphasis. They can observe sentence variations, such as short and long sentences, complex and simple structures, and apply them in their own writing, leading to more sophisticated and effective sentence construction (Nazzem, 2019). Exploring diverse writing styles exposes students to different words, idiomatic expressions, and vernacular vocabulary. Reading texts from various genres can introduce them to specialized terminology, jargon, or dialects. This exposure helps students broaden their vocabulary and helps them understand how word choice can enhance their writing.

#### **4.3.4 Increased Writing Creativity**

Increased writing creativity can be seen as one of the effects of strong reading skills on students’ English writing performance. According to Pritchard & Honeycutt (2005), when students engage in regular reading, they are exposed to a wide range of writing styles, genres, and ideas. This exposure helps expand their knowledge and understanding of language, vocabulary, and sentence structures. One student said:

*“After reading more books, I discovered new ways to express my ideas through writing.”*

The statement suggests that the student’s reading experience has positively impacted their writing skills. By reading more books, they have been exposed to different writing styles, techniques, and ideas, which has expanded their ability to express themselves through writing. To support this statement, Bus and Van Ijzendoorn (1999) found that regular exposure to literature positively influenced children's writing skills, particularly in terms of vocabulary knowledge, idea generation, and overall quality of writing. Additionally, Davis and Tharp (2007) focused on college students and their reading and writing practices. The findings revealed that students who engaged in extensive reading were more likely to produce higher quality writing and demonstrate better control over grammar and vocabulary. The study emphasized how reading provides exposure to various writing styles and genres, encouraging students to experiment and explore different approaches in their own writing. Moreover, Elley and Mangubhai (1983) found a significant positive correlation between reading and writing skills, suggesting that reading comprehension greatly contributes to writing proficiency.

Another student adds that:

*“Reading different genres helped me to think outside the box and come up with unique writing ideas.”*

The statement made by the student suggests that reading different genres has had a positive impact on their ability to think creatively and generate unique writing ideas. This idea aligns with several studies. For example, Mar and Oatley (2008) found that individuals who read fiction, specifically narrative works, exhibited higher levels

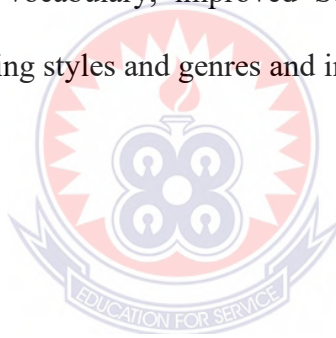
of empathy and improved social cognition, which are crucial elements for creative thinking. In a study by Kaufman and Beghetto (2009), the findings revealed that these individuals had a strong inclination toward reading diverse genres, as it provided them with a broad range of perspectives and ideas. Similarly, Dikli (2006) found that exposure to literature facilitated creative thinking and enhanced learners' ability to produce original and imaginative written work. Furthermore, Burke and Hagan (2009) demonstrated that individuals who engaged in extensive reading across various genres displayed higher levels of creativity in idea generation tasks compared to those with limited reading exposure. The assertion made by the students was supported by the female teacher. T<sub>2</sub> affirmed that:

*“I always encourage my students to read regularly and I have noticed that it has reflected in their writing creativity.”*

The statement made by the teacher suggests that regular reading has had a positive impact on the creativity of their students' writing. This idea is consistent with existing research on the relationship between reading habits and writing creativity. Torrance and Fidalgo (2007) indicated a positive correlation between the amount of reading done by students and their creative writing performance. Additionally, Plevin (2016) found that students who engaged in regular reading for pleasure demonstrated higher levels of creativity in their writing assignments compared to those who read less frequently. Li and Shan (2021) revealed that students who engaged in regular reading practices exhibited improved writing skills, including enhanced creativity in their written compositions. In the same vein, Lee and Schallert (2019) suggested that students who engaged in regular reading showed greater creativity and sophistication in their writing.

#### 4.4 Chapter Summary

This chapter provided the results of the qualitative analysis. The analysis was guided by the research questions formulated for the study. This chapter examined the various teaching methods used in teaching reading comprehension to the students. It was revealed that the phonics method was the commonest method used by the teachers. Furthermore, the chapter looked at the main problems encountered by students in reading comprehension. The problems emerged among the students were poor in vocabulary mastery, lack of reading fluency and issues with background knowledge. Finally, the chapter assessed the effect of reading skills on students' English writing skills. It was revealed that the major effect from the perspective of the students and teachers were enhanced vocabulary, improved Sentence Structure and Grammar, exposure to different writing styles and genres and increased writing creativity.



## CHAPTER FIVE

### SUMMARY, RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSION

#### 5.1 Introduction

This chapter presents a summary of the findings from the study as well as the conclusions, recommendations, and directions for future research. The chapter focuses on the implications of the findings from the study for policy making.

The study was conducted to investigate the impact of reading skills on students' writing using students of Amuman M/A Basic School as a case. Specifically, the study aimed at assessing various methods being used for the teaching reading comprehension to the students; also, on the part of students, the study sought to identify the main challenges/problems encountered by Students in reading comprehension and investigated the effect of reading skills on students' English writing performance. The study adopted a case study design with qualitative research approach. Fifty-six (56) students were sampled from one hundred twenty-five (125) students of the JHS 1 & 2 class. Also, two (2) English teachers were sampled from three (3) teachers of the school. Purposive sampling technique was used for the sampling of the respondents. Data for the study was collected through interviews, classroom observation and reading assessment. Data analysis was done using thematic analysis.

#### 5.2 Key Findings

The various teaching methods used in teaching reading comprehension to the students was the focus of the first research question. The following key findings emerged:

Through classroom observations, several teaching methods were identified. These were phonics method, the Whole-word method and language experience method.

It was revealed that the phonics method was the commonest method used by the teachers. Teachers found that this method was particularly effective for students who struggled with organizing their ideas while reading.

Research question two identified the main problems encountered by the students in reading comprehension. The findings include:

The main problems encountered by the students in reading comprehension were identified as poor vocabulary mastery, poor fluency and issues with background knowledge. The findings suggest that students who had poor vocabulary had difficulties in understanding texts, particularly unfamiliar words or academic language. The lack of vocabulary mastery led to lower levels of comprehension and poor academic performance. Furthermore, the lack of poor fluency among students also led to disinterest in reading, which further exacerbate reading difficulties. Finally, the findings indicate that students who lacked sufficient background knowledge in a topic struggled to understand the content of the text.

Research question three investigated how reading positively affect students' English writing performance. The findings include:

The findings of the study revealed that reading had a lot of positive impact on the students' English writing performance. Thus, reading enhanced their vocabulary, improved the students sentence structure and grammar. Furthermore, the study revealed that reading also expose the students to different writing styles and genres. In addition, it increased their writing creativity.

### **5.3 Conclusion**

Based on the findings, the following conclusions were made:

Firstly, based on the findings of the study, it can be concluded that the most teaching method used by the teachers for teaching reading comprehension is phonics method. However, there is a need for further training and development of teachers to effectively use these methods improve students' comprehension.

Additionally, the study found that the main problems encountered by students include poor vocabulary mastery, poor fluency, and issues with background. It is therefore concluded that efforts should be made to address these problems through the provision of appropriate teaching materials and support to students.

#### **5.4 Recommendations**

Based on the finding of the study, the following recommendations are made for policy and practice:

1. It is recommended that proper training programs should be designed and implemented to equip teachers with the necessary knowledge and skills to effectively teach reading comprehension.
2. The study showed that the lack of reading materials was a major challenge faced by the students. Thus, it is recommended that schools should provide adequate reading materials to students to enable them to practice reading comprehension regularly.
3. Teachers must make frantic efforts to ensure that students gain interest in reading, both at school and outside the school environment. More so, strategies such as dictation and pronunciation drills must be infused in language teaching to ensure that students improve their language competency through reading.

4. The school should provide additional resources, such as books, computers, and other educational tools, to support effective teaching and learning of reading comprehension.
5. Policy makers in the education sector such as the Ghana Education Service and Ministry of Education should review policies and guidelines on teaching reading comprehension in junior high schools to ensure that they are effective in meeting the needs of students.
6. Also, the need for teachers to adopt a variety of teaching methods and strategies that are tailored to the needs of individual students.

### **5.5 Suggestion for Future Research**

The following are recommended for future research:

Future studies on this topic should aim to incorporate a large sample size, drawn from different schools, in order to increase the generalizability of the findings. This will also help to minimize the potential for biased results that may arise from a small and localized sample.

Also, it is recommended that future studies should consider using a longitudinal design in order to assess the long-term impact of the interventions and strategies implemented to improve reading comprehension. This will provide a more comprehensive understanding of the effectiveness of these interventions and the persistence of improvements in reading comprehension.



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## APPENDIX

UNIVERSITY OF EDUCATION, WINNEBA

FACULTY OF FOREIGN LANGUAGES EDUCATION

DEPARTMENT OF APPLIED LINGUISTICS

INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR ENGLISH TEACHERS

**Dear Sir/Madam**

### **Introduction**

This study seeks to investigate “*the impact of reading skills on students’ writing using students of Amuman M/A Basic School as a case*”. You are kindly requested to volunteer information by responding to this interview. You are however assured that information provided to complete this interview would be treated with the strictest confidentiality.

### **QUESTIONS**

1. Can you tell me what problems you face when trying to understand what you read?
2. How well do you understand and use new words you come across while reading?
3. Do you find it difficult to read smoothly and at the right speed? Why?
4. Do you have trouble connecting what you read to what you already know or have experienced?
5. Are there any types of texts or subjects that you find hard to understand? Why?

6. What do you do when you come across unfamiliar or difficult words while reading?
7. What kind of help or resources do you think would improve your reading comprehension skills? Is there something specific you would like assistance with?

